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SEPTEMBER, 1944 • VOL. XVI, NO. 1

edited by PETER HUGH REED

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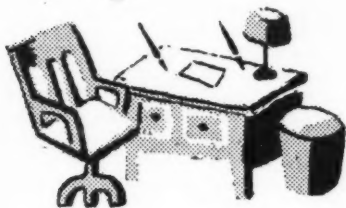
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LP GAINS IMPETUS

Editorial Notes

THOUGH there is still confusion among record buyers regarding "what to buy," the LP trend seems definitely on the up-grade. Only a few days after our August issue was mailed, the press broke with a story that the "peace negotiations between the 'big three' firms—Columbia, RCA Victor, and Decca—had broken down." Almost at the same time, domestic Decca announced it would follow the course of Capital and English Decca (London Gramophone in this country) in the reproduction of 33 rpm long-playing discs. Rumors from England predict that H.M. V is seriously considering a long-playing record. Reaction to the 45 in England has not to date been favorable. One engineer of our acquaintance writes: "In view of the fact that 33 rpm has been in use in wireless studios for years and in commercial recordings, the 45 rpm speed seems to me an unnecessary complication in the gramophone trade. Moreover, the midget disc handles far less easily than the existent 10 and 12-inch ones, long standardized."

To date, we are informed 17 companies have turned to long-playing discs. The only leading company as yet uncommitted to the 22-minute platter is RCA Victor. Says the Wall Street Journal in an article by Joseph M. Guilfoyle under date of August 23: "The war of the phonograph records has entered a new phase. Truce attempts have broken down and new alliances are shaping up for a fiercer show-

New Publication Date

Our publishing date will be until further notice the third week of each month. As most records for a particular issue arrive during the first 10 days of the month, this new publication date has been selected in the reader's interest.

down battle. . . . RCA has appropriated a 'war fund'—trade reports put it at well over \$1 million—to push its record this fall. Says Vice President J. B. Elliott: 'RCA is going all the way on the 45-speed record and will launch a doubly intensified merchandising and advertising program.'

In the same article, Mr. Guilfoyle gives some figures on sales of the 33 and the 45. In Boston, Chicago, Dallas, and San Francisco, the stores report they are selling four or five LP discs to one 45. The reactions and chatter, back and forth, in the trade and among record buyers could be continued endlessly "far into the night."

Decca's announcement of LPs augurs a better disc from that company that we have had in the past. It will be good to have such inimitable sets as Decca's "Oklahoma," "Carousel," "One Touch of Venus," etc., transferred from poor surfaced shellac records to smoother surfaced LPs.

LP Versus Tape

Meantime, it is persistently rumored in the technical field that RCA Victor is using its 45 as a stop-gap until it thinks pre-recorded tape is feasible to place on the market. Unquestionably, pre-recorded tape will in time become a keen competitor to the disc, but it is our contention that the large manufacture of worthwhile LP recordings, having sound artistic values and realistic reproduction, is proving a keen and perhaps insurmountable barrier for pre-recorded tape reels now and possibly in the future. Today, one can buy high fidelity reproduction for record use at a cheaper price than one can acquire high fidelity reproduction of pre-recorded tape.

One San Francisco reader who transferred a year ago most of his large record collection to pre-recorded tape writes us as follows: "It would seem I was a bit hasty in transferring my recordings to tape and I must admit I rue the sale of my original discs. In some of my most cherished sets, 'ghosts' of alien tones have crept in creating a diffusion of sound that never existed in the original recording. Too, the volume level has decreased considerably and I'm wondering whether it will be satisfactorily in existence in a few more years. If one has ever dropped a reel of tape, one knows a loss that can prove far more expensive than the breakage of a single record in a set."

At a summer party, not so long ago, a prominent lady artist was asked what she thought of the new records and the possibility of pre-recorded tape. With a twinkle in her eye, she replied: "To paraphrase Dwight Fiske's famous Kitty Malibu, who said in the early '30s via the record, 'I believe in the freedom of the press and the NRA,' let me say, I believe in the freedom of the press and the record. What a joy to sit back and hear over 20 minutes of uninterrupted music. The solo artist cannot but prefer the long-playing record to tape, as it permits the owner to hear any part of his or her recital at will and without long waits. Though one hopes, as a serious and conscientious artist, that the majority will feel inclined to hear an uninterrupted recital, there are too often hampering factors in a home to prevent this."

There was some aversion at first to operatic, semi-classical and popular selections being strung together on a long-playing record. But the fact that a break has been made between numbers on such discs has broken down opposition, as the needle can be placed at any point desired to allow for the enjoyment of a particular piece.

The Unbroken Mood

That more and more people are showing a predilection for having no interruptions in serious music speaks for the development of future music listeners. In the past five years our experience in lecturing for music societies, educational and teaching groups has proved that even those, who regarded themselves as "direct listeners," were unable or unwilling to sustain the mood of a recorded composition extending beyond eight or twelve minutes. From the period of the first interruption at the end of four minutes a noticeable restlessness began to manifest itself in all listening groups. If the composition ran to 12 or 16 minutes, considerable audible whispering could be heard. We have discussed this with a number of people and all admit to encountering the same reactions with audiences. People do not seem to be able to retain the mood if broken at a meaningful and salient point. A climatic effect which is extended from one record side to another is not sustained or appreciated by the majority.

In lecturing for a group last year on "Some Aspects of English Modal Music,"

(Continued on page 6)



IMPROVE YOUR PHONOGRAPH

WITHOUT TEARS

By Robert S. Lanier

PART II — PICKUPS

THE PURCHASE of a more refined pickup has a long and honorable history as a method of improving phonograph reproduction. All pickups in common use during past periods have been easily criticized for faults in performance. This is mainly a reflection of the difficulty of the pickup design problem, coupled to obvious commercial necessities and habits. To some extent, it also reflects the steady improvement in standards of quality and reproduction. To keep up with this improvement, or simply to buy more musical pleasure than the common-run pickup could give him, the phonograph enthusiast has long been accustomed to changing to a better pickup.

The post-war or "variable reluctance" period of pickup development, in which we find ourselves, offers high rewards for this pickup-changing activity. Several relatively inexpensive types now on the market have a quality markedly above anything available for home use to the end of the war. It is interesting to note that the present variable reluctance, or "moving iron" magnetic pickups represent a return to the design principles used in the first electrical pickups in the late 1920s. In the late 1930s, magnetic pickups were all but abandoned when the crystal, with its simplicity, inexpensiveness and some-

what wider frequency range, swept all before it. (Parenthetically, the advent of the crystal influenced recording characteristics in this country with the result that for this and other reasons, American recording was tailor-made to crystal pickups. Viz.: Gordon Mercer's article, "Revolution in Recording," in the June 1945 issue of this magazine.")

At present, we are up a turn in the spiral—back to variable reluctance pickups. But the contemporary models are far advanced over their progenitors of 20 years ago. Moving systems are many times smaller and lighter, more refined in action: frequency response, distortion level, operating pressure—all are in line with the post-war standards of quality, which show such a big leap over prevalent commercial standards in the pre-war period.

The increased refinement and responsiveness of the new pickups carry with them the necessity for careful adjustment to the balance of the reproducing system. As noted in the preceding installment of this article, improvement of a phonograph by addition of one new unit often entails the adjustment of the whole outfit. This is requisite in order to realize the fullest, or expected, benefits.

The refinement of the moving system in the new pickups means that in general the voltage level is much lower than with earlier types. This loss of voltage is a

price well paid for the much greater mechanical compliance, or delicacy, obtained in the new designs. It means, however, that more amplification is required to reach the proper volume level, and at least one more stage, or tube, must be added to the amplifier. A majority of post-war amplifiers have already incorporated this additional stage, or preamplification, as it is called. For the older amplifiers, a number of one-tube preamplifier units are on the market which easily added to the outfit. They take very little space and usually fit quite simply into existing cabinets.

The difference between the crystal and magnetic in their response to the bass range on modern records means that when shifting from crystal to magnetic, a special bass compensation is required. This is a result of the well known technique of restricting the bass frequencies, used in modern recordings. The characteristic of magnetic recording and reproduction is such that the bass patterns on the record must get progressively wider as the frequency goes down, in order to maintain constant volume. The lowest frequencies would take up too much space and serious overcutting would result if reduction were to begin at some point. From the advent of electric reproduction, a "turn-over" point, at which restriction begins, has been employed. From this point downward to the lowest frequency characteristic in the recording, a progressive reduction in bass is applied. This produces approximately a constant amplitude of bass pattern to correspond to constant volume.

The Crystal Pickup

The crystal pickup is itself a constant amplitude device. It compensates exactly for the below-turnover characteristic of the record. The magnetic pickups, however, require a circuit which effectively reverses the restriction on bass used in the recording. Most of the one-tube preamplifiers, referred to above, incorporate the required compensation, as do the newer postwar amplifiers designed to operate with the new pickups.

For the more elaborate phonographs, preamplifiers are available or can be built with adjustable compensating circuits. Fixed compensation will give satisfactory results with most recordings. However, superior results are obtainable with a system permitting choice, by means of a switch, of three or four bass "turnover" points. This complication of the machine is desirable

because the various units of the American phonograph industry, and the American industry as opposed to the European, have never settled on exactly what frequency point should be used as the turnover. It varies between 200 and about 700 cycles-per-second on records generally available. Thus the compensating circuit should allow choice of, say, 200, 300, 500 and 700 c.p.s. as the turnover points, in order to bring the bass back closely to its proper level on any record that may be acquired. It is unfortunate that no standardization of recording characteristics has ever been adopted by the world wide phonograph industry. This shifting bass turnover in domestic recordings makes our American products difficult to reproduce correctly from foreign equipment, and the foreign recordings equally difficult to reproduce on American equipment. The latter, generally employing a lower turnover, have too much bass on most American machines. This is especially true where a crystal pickup is in use. The adjustable bass turnover device outlined above is a "must" with the modern pickup, and only recently has been given serious attention by machine designers. It will allow the majority of both foreign and domestic recordings to be reproduced properly in the bass range.

The Bass Control

The reader may wonder what role the ordinary type of gradually adjustable bass control, incorporated in many amplifiers, plays in the compensation of magnetic pickups. If the control actually gives a bass boost, it will go far toward eliminating the complete emptiness in the bass resulting from absence of any compensation at all. However, such controls do not in general exactly compensate for the "turnover" technique in the recordings. For the best results, compensation of the magnetic pickup, and bass control as ordinarily understood, should be considered as two separate problems. The more elaborate and carefully designed systems sometimes use both. With the new pickups a good solution is to leave out the older type of bass control and concentrate on a well designed, adjustable compensation system. Switching from one turnover point to another gives stronger, cleaner control of the bass and is sufficient to correct the balance of nearly all recordings.

The reader should not conclude that, since we have to go to quite some trouble to "compensate" the new pickups in the bass range, there is something deficient in their design. Compensation is necessary, as explained, because of the special bass-restricting technique used in modern recordings, an engineering choice which causes obvious complications, but is apparently required in the present state of the art. When the compensation has been made, the new pickups in general produce a cleaner, truer bass than did the crystal pickup popular to the end of the war.

In the high frequency end, the problem is just the opposite of that in the bass. An important result of the refinement of design in the new pickups is their extended high-frequency response. The crystal arrived somewhat bumpily at 6,000 or 7,000 cycles, at best. Today, characteristic that go smoothly to 10,000 cycles and even higher are available in moderately priced pickups. This was considered a laboratory type of response in the pre-war period.

High Fidelity Virtues

The virtues of this extended range are, of course, increased clarity, bite, and fidelity in the reproduction of the music. The disadvantages are: (1) increased sensitivity to surface noise (an offsetting factor is that smoother response tends to reduce the apparent surface noise); (2) increased reproduction of the distortion on poorer recordings; (3) production of high frequencies which are more apt to be distorted by the amplifier and loudspeaker system than the middle range.

Another factor is that on many contemporary recordings, the high end is boosted sharply, to reduce the effect of surface noise, and to compensate for high losses in the slow-moving parts of the record, etc. This applies particularly to recent LP recordings. The result of this high boosting, combined with factors mentioned in the preceding paragraph, is a tendency to shrillness, especially of string tone, with the new 78s and LPs. Generally speaking, this distortion is confined to extended range equipment though some of it is apparent from many commercial outfits.

To meet this high-boosting situation and to make older, noisy and distorted recordings playable, another correction circuit is requisite with the new pickups. This is a high-frequency control circuit. The old-fashioned, tone-control circuit does reason-

ably well, because what is needed is an adjustable reduction of the highs. The reduction should be a gradual "roll-off," in engineering slang. The very sharp high cut-offs that were popular 10 years ago in custom-built systems are now rejected, because the distortion inherent in sharp frequency control has become objectionable, with the general improvement in reproduction standards.

The best solution to the high-frequency problem with the new pickups and records is a switching system which allows a series of gradually deeper roll-off curves to be chosen. There should be first a "wide-open" position — no reduction of highs boosting. (The boosting or peaking varies considerably, from up 6 d.b. at 10,000 to up 16 d.b., this latter level being the so-called NAB curve used in radio and many LPs.) The succeeding positions of the switch allow the highs to be cut to the right amount to make noisy records listenable, or to remove the shrillness of too strong highs found on so many contemporary recordings.

A well designed tone arm is essential for good results with the new pickups. Such an arm assures good alignment which gives better reproduction and saves record wear. In addition, the pickup and tone arm together form a mechanically dynamic system which can easily have a destructive tendency to vibrate on its own. In fact, the elimination of such arm vibration requires careful design. The greater refinement of the new pickups makes the whole system more vulnerable to the annoyances of poor arm design. Many of the lighter, cheaper tone arms in common use to the end of the war have a tendency to produce groove jumping, distortion, and peaks in the middle and high range, together with increased record and needle wear, when used with a modern pickup. Too short a tone arm, as used with many of the new, extended-range crystal pickups, will often result in many of the troubles outlined.

Aligned Tone Arms

Tone arms designed specifically for use with each of the new pickups are available, in most cases at relatively low prices. The experimenter, who anticipates trying different pickups from time to time, should buy the best tone arm that he can afford, preferably one of the newer professional types with adjustable pressure and precision construction.

With the LP pickups, arm problems are more acute because of the extremely low pressure at which the pickup operates. Friction must be negligible in both the vertical and horizontal pivots, and the turntable and motor board must be carefully levelled, to avoid groove jumping or serious distortion. Good alignment cannot be over-emphasized, though the shortness of many arms prevents the ideal solution of this problem.

The needle problem, as old as the phonograph itself, reaches its most satisfactory solution to date in several of the new pickups. The constant and understandable demand for a permanent needle has produced at best the semi-permanent sapphire and diamond, and also the whole congeries of "10,000-play" metal types, which have held out false hope to two or three generations of record buyers. Most of these latter needles are actually good for less than one quarter of the number of plays claimed, if one does not wish his valued discs quickly worn out. It can be stated that as of this writing, there is no such article as a "permanent" needle. Let us hope that one will soon be invented.

In the meantime, the precious stones provide a satisfactory semi-permanence that makes the needle in the pickups employing them a monthly or semi-yearly worry, rather than a daily or one-record-side one. But these hard needles must be used in highly refined pickups of very small moving mass and low pressure. And the jewel itself must be "built in," that is, the stylus itself must be a carefully integrated part of the design of the particular pickup.

In the older type of pickup which allows for changing needles, the metal needle often proves the best bet, if changed frequently enough. The phonograph owner is the best judge of which metal needle works best in his outfit. He should use the one which gives the clearest reproduction and best frequency balance on his records, and put in a new one as soon as there are signs of wear. If records that formerly sounded clear become a little distorted, and especially if gray dust begins to accumulate on record and needle, it is time for a new point.

The necessary refinement and integration of stylus design, that must go with the use of jewel points, are reasonably well provided in several of the new pickups. In addition, at least two have recently introduced methods for changing the point, when the inevitable loss of shape does fin-

ally occur. This is accomplished by replacing a part of the moving system of the pickup with an identical new part, which includes the new, built-in jewel point. This arrangement may well be the best blow struck to date at the needle problem.

This article has been mainly a recital of dangers to avoid, set forth in the hope that some of the problems encountered by readers in improving their machines will be better understood, and the way opened to real listening satisfaction. The reader must not be discouraged, because present day reproduction, when the dangers are understood and avoided, is by far the most pleasurable that the phonograph owner has known. Many experiences exist to prove that the effort is well worth while.

EDITORIAL NOTES

(Continued from page 2)

we found that the audience was completely absorbed with the first record sides of compositions by Vaughan Williams and Butterworth, but once the records were turned the mood was broken and restlessness was apparent. Requested by others to repeat this program, we decided on a different course of action. We took the recordings to an engineer friend and had him dub them onto acetate at 33 rpm. This recourse proved successful in sustained listening; and even when the music ran over 12 minutes, no audible disturbance was noted. In lecturing on operatic music, the ability to relate an aria to a scene (which the long-playing disc permits) provides a dramatic continuity which preserves greater interest. Moreover, the inclusion of other characters, who though contributing only a line or two, gives dramatic verity to the scene. For example, a recording of the final scene from Strauss's "Salome" by Welitsch, taken from the air, with the voice of Herod at the end proved more thrilling to a listening group than did the Columbia recording of this scene without the short but psychologically important utterance of Herod at the end. Those final bars with their sweeping musical realism are made real when the voice of Herod is heard commanding "Man toete dieses Weib!". Without that short command the listener is less apt to visualize the dramatic ending, with the soldiers rushing forward and crushing Salome under their shields.



SOME AMERICAN INDIAN MUSIC ON RECORDS

By Henry Shultz

Part IV

THE ETHNIC FOLKWAY LIBRARY

("Music of the Sioux and Navajo").

[NOTE: Still another set of records is this one issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library (Album No. EFL-1401), called "Music of the Sioux and Navajo." These recordings were made by Mr. Willard Rhodes in various Sioux and Navajo communities, with the co-operation of the U. S. Indian Service. The album consists of four ten-inch vinylite discs containing seven Sioux songs and eight Navajo songs. A seven-page illustrated brochure, with foreword by Mr. Willard Beatty, Director of Education for the U. S. Indian Service, and Mr. René d'Harnoncourt, Chairman of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board, contains valuable notes on the music by Mr. Rhodes. This brochure is — except for the fine print — a model of what

such album-booklets should be. The records, in general, are of good quality and have quiet surfaces. It should be mentioned also that the record-labels are very precise and intelligent. The cost of the album is \$7.33. If you cannot find it in your local music store, it can be ordered from the Haskell Indian Institute, Lawrence, Kansas.]

SIOUX: "Rabbit Song." (Wanblee, South Dakota). **Male chorus, female voice, with drum.** EFL No. 120-A (in EFL Album No. 1401).

No better description of this music can be given than that of Dr. Rhodes in his notes: "The Rabbit Dance is a modern social dance which was introduced on the Sioux Reservations sometime during the past fifty years [and] the Rabbit Dance Songs are the modern love songs of the Sioux . . . The text of this piece is sung in Dakota, the language of the Sioux, with an exception of the initial word, 'Dearie,' which is sung in English . . .

The words, as in the Omaha Dance Songs, are not introduced until the melody has been set by singing it once through with meaningless syllables . . .

"Dearie, I think the best of you,
But you are bad,
You fool me again and again.
Give me back that picture,
Then I will live away from you."

"The song is started by a leader who sings the opening phrase alone. As he approaches the end of the first phrase the other singers take up the song, not by joining the leader but by starting the song anew from the beginning, while the leader finishes his phrase. Upon reaching the end of the opening phrase the leader joins in the melody with the main chorus and from that point on the song is sung in unison."

This interesting canonic effect is to be observed in the Omaha Dance and Honoring Songs noted below. The singing is shrill but spirited and in decided contrast to all the rest of the Indian music discussed in the previous pages.

SIoux: "Sun Dance Song." (Wanblee, South Dakota). **Male Chorus, eaglebone Whistle, drum.** EFL No. 1420-B (1) (in EFL Album No. 1401).

This is one of the songs sung during the great Sun Dance ceremonial of the Sioux. Prodded by missionaries and other well-meaning people, the government outlawed the ceremonial in the 1880's, thereby giving the coup-de-grace to the great Sioux culture in which the Sun Dance was one of the pivotal items. That the old culture dies hard, these records are living testimony. Again to quote Dr. Rhodes, "the song recorded here opens with an introduction in slow tempo accompanied by a tremolo roll in the drum which leads to the more rhythmic dance. A whistle made of the wing-bone of an eagle, formerly blown by the dancers, is heard in the second section of the song."

SIoux: "Omaha Dance Song." (Wanblee, South Dakota). **Male chorus drum, bells.** EFL No. 1420-B (2) (in EFL Album No. 1401).

The Omaha Dance, "formerly restricted to warrior members of the society . . . is today a vehicle for brilliantly-costumed dancers who not only find emotional release in their exhibitionistic and individualistic dancing but provide entertainment

for the onlookers." It is one of the most spectacular of all Indian dances. Dr. Rhodes says that the song on this record was inspired by the recent World War II in which so many Indians of all tribes gave their lives, and he gives the text in his notes:

"From across the ocean
The Japanese came charging.
The President wanted our help
So the Sioux boys went over there.
It is so."

SIoux: "Peyote Cult Song (Pine Ridge, South Dakota). **Male voice, water-drum, gourd rattle.** EFL No. 1421-A (1) (in Album No. 1401).

I shall quote from Dr. Rhodes' very balanced and non-controversial discussion of the extremely controversial Peyote cult, which, I might mention, has so far taken root in only one of the New Mexico pueblos — Taos:

"The Peyote Cult, or Native American Church, represents a curious blending of Christian symbolism and beliefs with rituals and practices of Native Indian religions. During the past century the religion has spread from tribe to tribe, adjusting its practice to the culture of the various tribes while adhering to a central core of belief and ceremony. At the night-long meetings of the cult, [the] central feature of the service is the ceremonial eating of the peyote, the seed-pod of a cactus (imported from the Southwest) which the Indians identify with the Supreme Being. The ecstatic trance induced by eating the peyote is supplemented by the hypnotic music which plays an important rôle in the ceremony. The peyote songs, always sung by an individual singer, never by a group, are accompanied by a small gourd rattle which the singer shakes in a rapid tempo of regular pulsations while a drummer squats before him and marks the rhythm on a specially-prepared water drum. Four being the sacred number, the songs are sung in sets of four, each song being sung four times. A few repeated hearings of peyote music suffices to impress the listener with the distinct vocal technique, melodic style, and structural form which set these songs apart from other Indian music."

SIoux: "Love Song" (Wanblee, South Dakota). **Single male voice, unaccompanied.** EFL No. 1421-A (2) (in EFL Album No. 1401).

According to Dr. Rhodes, "love songs were sung by young men as an act of courtship. The words were of a personal nature and the aura of association which surrounded them carried a very special message to the . . . girl of whom they were sung. Among the stylistic features which distinguish these solo songs are the slow tempo, the nasal timbre of the voice, and the absence of strong accents and pulsating tone so predominant in music of the Plains area."

SIUOX: "Love Song" (Pine Ridge, South Dakota). **Solo flute, unaccompanied.** EFL No. 1421-B (1) (in EFL Album No. 1401).

The flute, according to Dr. Rhodes, was used by the Sioux "for love charming and serenading. [The] instrument has become a museum relic of the past and its rarity among North America Indians today suggests that it may never have been as common in their musical culture as is generally believed. The technique of flute making and flute playing, more involved and intricate than that of drum making and drum playing as practiced by the Indians, would tend to limit the instrument to a small group of specialized musicians. The great flute makers and flute players are gone . . ."

The melody on this record is very similar to the one on 1421-A (2), the differences being accounted for by melodic ornaments more characteristic of the flute than of the human voice.

SIUOX: "Honoring Song" (Wanblee, South Dakota). **Mixed chorus with drum.** EFL No. 1421-B (2) (in EFL Album No. 1401).

"This song may be heard throughout the year at any social gathering on the reservation. Since generosity is one of the four cardinal virtues recognized and stressed in the Sioux culture, public giving has become an institutionalized form of acquiring social prestige. Any act of generosity will prompt the singing of the Honoring Song as a token of public recognition."

NAVAJO: "Riding Song" (Fort Wingate, New Mexico). **Mixed chorus with drum.** EFL No. 1422-A (1) (in EFL Album No. 1401).

This song is sung while riding horseback, either alone or with others, chiefly for protection against evil spirits which

might be encountered on the journey. The Navajos, like most western Indians, are great horsemen; and it is not uncommon to see even little children of five or six riding large horses by themselves and singing this song as they ride along.

NAVAJO: "Song of Happiness" (Port Wingate, New Mexico). **Children's chorus, drum, harmonica.** EFL No. 1422-A (2) (in EFL Album No. 1401).

This wonderful song, also known as "the Fort Sumner Song," had its origin during the tragic days of the captivity of the Navajos at Fort Sumner, New Mexico, after their defeat by Kit Carson in 1864. It was sung by the women "to sustain the morale and hope of the men" during their incarceration in this U. S. Government concentration camp. Though this was the point of lowest ebb in the Navajos' fortunes even then they did not lose hope, and since their release these magnificent people have only begun to show what they are made of.

This recording in unique (and delightful) in that one of the school boys who recorded it at the U. S. Indian School at Fort Wingate, had his harmonica along at the recording session, and played along with the chorus.

NAVAJO: "Spinning Dance Songs" (Toadlena, Arizona). **Female voice unaccompanied.** EFL No. 1422-B (1, 2) (in EFL Album No. 1401).

"The Spinning Dance is an old social dance in which the dancers spin circles within circles." These two songs are beautifully sung by a woman with a beautiful voice whose pulsations serve to mark the rhythm. I have often heard Navajo girls singing the second of these songs as they went about their daily chores of sweeping, etc.

NAVAJO: "Corn Grinding Song" (Lukachukai, Arizona). **Female voice with drum.** EFL No. 1422-B (3) (in EFL Album No. 1401).

The listener will notice the difference between this Navajo Corn Grinding Song and the Laguna Corn Grinding song reviewed above. In the Pueblos, the young men frequently come and sing to the girls grinding corn. This song is apparently sung by a girl as she is grinding her corn, but how she manages to beat a drum at the same time, I haven't figured out. I have played this record for many of my

Navajo friends, and they all insist it is a "Going Away Song," to be sung just before dawn when somebody is going away. They always, for example, sing it before the children go away to school. The same songs, however, are often used by the Navajos for more than one purpose, so this is not to be held against the record label.

The recording is delightful for its spontaneity. The girl who sings on this disc was apparently amused during the recording, for her laughter is barely kept under the surface, and at one point really breaks through.

NAVAJO: "Squaw Dance Songs" (Pine Springs, Arizona). **Male chorus with drum.** EFL No. 1423-A (1) (in EFL Album No. 1401).

Here are still more "Squaw Dance" songs, already discussed in previous pages as part of the "Enemy Way" ceremony. There is an infinite number of such songs, and the ones on this disc are not mere duplications of those on the Boulton, Archuleta, or Candelario records. A few Navajos have told me that in their area of the reservation the songs on this record are "Gift Songs," used "when people give gifts to each other."

NAVAJO: "Silversmith's Song" (Pine Springs, Arizona). **Male voice with anvil.** EFL No. 1423-A (2) (in EFL Album No. 1401).

The Navajos are noted for their handsome silver jewelry. It has been pointed out by John Adair, in his authoritative work on Navajo and Pueblo silver, that though the Zuñis (and other Pueblo silversmiths) use silver as a means for holding together elaborate designs in tourquoise, the Navajos use tourquoise as an incidental complement to silver. However that may be, it is inevitable that the Navajo smiths should sing at their work. According to Dr. Rhodes' notes, this song was performed "by Ambrose Roan Horse, one of the master silversmiths of the Navajo." All the Navajos for whom I have played this record say that Mr. Roan Horse is singing a Riding Song while he is

beating his anvil; but that is his privilege, and a small matter.

The recording of this song, and that of the Squaw Dance songs (above) are, incidentally, not good, but on the other hand they are not so bad as to impede enjoyment of the music. This is the only bad side in the whole album.

NAVAJO: "Night Chant (Yei-bi-chai)" (Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado). **Male chorus with gourd rattles.** EFL No. 1423-B (in EFL Album No. 1401).

Here is yet another version of the Yei-bi-chai chants. This one makes a clearer differentiation between the "normal" and the falsetto voices of the singers than do the other versions discussed above, but nevertheless I do not find it as exciting as those on the Boulton, Archuleta, or Candelario discs. It is, however, taken at a faster pace than the one in the Candelario set, and is for that reason preferred, by Navajos for whom I have played it. The recording is good.

The music on all these records will repay the closest study. It is hard for me to say whether its emotional impact will be as great on one who has never seen an Indian ceremonial or pleasure dance, or heard this music otherwise *in situ*, as it is to those of us who know it and who inevitably associate it with the great culture of a people we love. I think I find Indian music intrinsically exciting and intrinsically interesting *qua* music; but I am perfectly aware that the psychological overtones of my response to it are altogether different from those of the Indians whose own music it is. The ultimate aesthetic significance is conditional by our respective cultural heritages.

In any event, the music lover whose view is limited on the one end by plainchant and on the other by (whom shall we say?) Bartók — in other words, whose view is confined to the musical traditions of Western Europe — is sure to have his eyes opened by these records; and, if he approaches them with a mind uncluttered by musical preconceptions, and with a reasonably sensitive ear, will be treating himself to an unforgettable aesthetic experience.





Recent Importations

IN 1917, When Paul Claudel was appointed French Minister to Brazil, he took along with him as his secretary the composer Darius Milhaud, who had shortly before completed his studies at the Conservatory. In the two years they passed in that fascinating land away from the demanding attentions of Paris society the ballet "L'Homme et son Désir" was conceived. Inspired by performances of Nijinsky and the Russian Ballet at Rio, the poet Claudel and the musician Milhaud worked on their creation lovingly, at a leisurely pace — "tout doucement," as Milhaud describes it. The first performance did not take place until 1921 in Paris, where it was premiered by the Swedish Ballet amid much excitement, intrigue and scandal.

The ballet has been seen very little since that time; nor has the concert version for 16 solo instruments and percussion, which Milhaud prepared in 1918, been programmed with any regularity, apparently because of the difficulty of the percussion parts and the unconventional orchestration employed. The original score called for a vocal quartet, piccolo, oboe, clarinet, trumpet, double string quartet, string bass, harp and 15 percussion instruments.

There is a primordial quality to this work, something similar to the mood of "La Création du Monde," but without the negroid jazz influences prevalent in that scores. Actually, "L'Homme et son Désir" is more closely related to the major "Choros" of Villa-Lobos, who also took his inspiration from the sounds and sensations of Brazil's primeval forests. One does not find the faded, jazz-daubed pastiche-work of "Le Boeuf sur le Toit," nor the enervating Latin rhythms of "Protée." The score is set in strict square time, employing polytonal devices on occasion, couched in an idiom that is penetratingly direct and immediately compelling. One

can only wonder at the prodigious results obtained with such economy of means.

It is especially fitting that Thibault de Champrosay elected to launch his new recording enterprise with the first issue of "L'Homme et son Désir" (Editions Champrosay TC-11) to reach the phonograph. It speaks well for the future of his company that he retained the composer to supervise the enregistrement, hired an accomplished ensemble of instrumentalists under the knowing baton of Roger Desormière, and saw to it that the best possible engineering practices were employed. The result is a definitive album of unquestionable value, both historical and emotional, which proved so outstanding that the French magazine "Disques," when awarding their annual prizes, created a special Grand Prix d'Honneur for it. In a two-page eulogy in the April issue of that publication the critic Claude Rostand can find but one fault with the set. He doesn't like the design on the cover! A more trenchant complaint: from my point of view, would be the price: \$8.50 for two discs is a little steep, even if it is a limited edition with some fancy artwork.

Oliver Messiaen

The name of Oliver Messiaen, practically unknown in this country before the war, is increasingly to be found in program listings and musical articles. That gentleman, in the flesh, is currently composer-in-residence at the Tanglewood summer sessions, sharing composition classes with the indefatigable Aaron Copland. Messiaen's popularity in advanced French musical circles is similar to the approbation enjoyed by Sartre in parallel literary camps. His first major effort to be recorded is his "Trois Liturgies de la Présence Divine," performed by the Paris Conservatory Orchestra and women's chorus conducted by Roger Desormière (Pathé PDT 190/194). His symphonic work "L'Ascension," which has been played by Monteux, Koussevitzky and Stokowski, will be released next month by Columbia.

These "Liturgies" are apparently scored for feminine voices, string orchestra, piano and Ondes Martinots. The last-named is a species of theremin, more tellingly employed by Pierre Vellones in his Tibetan ballet, "Le Paradis d'Amitabha" (French H.M.V. L1053/4). The premiere of the Messiaen score, at the Concerts de la Pléiade in 1944, created quite a stir, moving some critics, in the first heat of their enthusiasm, to announce that it was an

event similar to the creation of "Pelleas" or the "Sacre du Printemps."

That Messiaen is profoundly preoccupied by religious motivation there can be no doubt. That the ardor of his convictions is transmitted by tonal or rhythmic means to the listeners of the "Trois Petites Liturgies" is very questionable. I, for one, after numerous careful playing of these discs, can find little valid emotional content that is in any way fresh or stimulating. Perhaps if I had been able to obtain a score, I should have been more favorably impressed.

Echos of Gilbert and Sullivan flavored with a rub of garlic and a dash of chicory — how else can one describe the lively tunes of Offenbach's "La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein"? Particularly reminiscent is the aria "Piff, paff, paff, pouff" of General Boum-Boum, a sort of Gallic Major General Stanley, which is included in selections from the operetta recorded by Lucienne Jourfier, Michel Dens and Louis Musy with the Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by Marcel Cariven (Pathé PD84/86). Two of the excerpts, the duet "Mon Amour" and the charming tenor solo "Je viens de faire un rêve magnifique" I can not locate in my copy of the score. At any rate, the music is delightful, the singing accomplished, the instrumental support nostalgically sloppy.

An interesting, somewhat unusual series of recordings has been made by the chamber orchestra of the San Pietro a Majella di Napoli Conservatory. This famous music school, which boasts Bellini as its most illustrious graduate, is run by the Italian government, its highly-prized scholarships won only through stiff and arduous competition. The opera composers Luigi Ricci ("Crispino e la comare") and Giordano ("Andrea Chenier," "Fedora," etc.) studied and taught there, also the horn virtuoso de Angelis, whose method is highly regarded throughout the musical world.

18th Century Ballet Music

The director of the Conservatory orchestra, Maestro Lualdi, who succeeded the composer Martucci in that position, has made a series of arrangements of little-known 17th and 18th century works, the best of which to reach us is the ballet music from the opera "Proserpina" of Paisiello (Italian HMV DB05357/8). This is a delectable score, tastefully arranged and

lovingly — if somewhat unsurely — performed. The instrumental group sounds like a well-trained amateur orchestra — which is what it is, nothing more. In this case, the music is so charming that the occasionally tentative quality of the playing does not intrude.

Unconditionally and enthusiastically recommended is Rossini's vivacious "Quartet in F major," scored for flute, clarinet, horn, and bassoon and expertly played by soloists of the Vienna Philharmonic (Italian HMV DA4483/4). Any one who ever harbored any doubts as to Rossini's knowledge of instrumentation is invited to inspect the compact efficiency of his miniature masterpiece.

Some Operatic Vocals

Vocal singles of interest include the cavatina "In questo semplice modesto asile" from Donizetti's forgotten opera "Betly" (Margherita Carosio on HMV DA1910) and the "Fruehlingsdufte" aria from Mozart's "Idomeneo" (Erna Berger on HMV DB6617). Donizetti composed more than sixty operas, of which approximately ten are known — even vaguely — to present-day audiences. "Betly," reported to have been performed as recently as 1933, in Lugano, is a no more intriguing title than "Emelia di Liverpool" or "Elisabetta a Kenilworth," two more of Donizetti's forgotten efforts. The cavatina in question is an attractive example of the composer's facile style, complete with bum-ta-ta accompaniment. Carosio has a knowing sense of the required mood. Her vocalism is hardly more than adequate, unfortunately.

The "Idomeneo" aria plumbs far greater depths. It is a touching love song, infused with the glowing warmth of genuine ardor. Projected by the right singer, it could rival most of Mozart's more familiar arias. Erna Berger, whose prewar recordings set a very high standard of artistic endeavor, seems unable to cope successfully with the stiff requirements of this piece. Indifferent orchestral accompaniment is no boon to her task.

This disc, however, is valuable as it is one of the few available recordings from Mozart's only mature opera "serio."

—A. W. P.

RAMEAU: Les Indes Galantes—Extended excerpts (Opera-Ballet). Yvonne Gouverne Chorale and Hewitt Chamber Orchestra, Maurice Hewitt, conductor,

with Irene Joachim, soprano, R. Malvasio, tenor, and Camille Mauranne, baritone. Les Discophiles Francais set 6; six discs, price \$15.00.

RAMEAU turned his attention to opera at the age of 50, at which time he was enjoying the adulation of all who knew his brilliant, glittering music. One would scarcely need anything but the score of "Les Indes Galantes" to realize the tastes of French society in the mid-eighteenth century. The plot draws heavily on every device of fancy and mystery; the allegories involved are pompous and rhetorical, but immensely imaginative. "Les Indes Galantes" consists of a prologue in which characters representing four European nations, brought together in a garden by Hebe, "Goddess of Youth," are scattered to four corners of the globe by a malevolent spirit. Four ensuing episodes relate the adventures of the respective protagonists, in Persia, Turkey, among the Iroquois and the Incas of Peru. In the course of the opera we are treated to such matters as an adventure in a Turkish harem, a Persian flower festival, intrigue in a Hiawatha setting, and a spectacular Inca sun-ritual climaxed by an erupting volcano.

The music is a sheer delight. The leading critics of Rameau's day pronounced it "truly Indian." (Bear in mind that the "Indies" at the time referred to any exotic land.) Today we can regard the rushing scales and shrieking piccolo which depict the volcano as amusing and naive, but the effect at the premier must have been overwhelming. The magnificent invocation for the Inca priest, and the lovers' duet just before the eruption are as fine as anything from the period. The lovely air from the prologue, "Resonnez, Musettes," with its bagpipe imitations and warbling birds is glorious fancy.

The Best of the Opera

In this splendid French recording Maurice Hewitt has chosen the cream of Rameau's elaborate conceit, and has arranged almost a full hour of wonderful sounds. Following the composer's own example (Rameau later arranged a suite from the opera for his own concert use), Hewitt has altered the sequence of the music into

something more consistently dramatic. Thus we begin with the Inca episode and find bits of the prologue somewhere in the middle. No harm done. His soloists are all extremely good; hence my one regret is that more vocal selections were not be included. Mauranne's performance of the Inca priest is marvelously fluent, and I also like the sweetness of Joachim in the prologue. The chorus and orchestra perform magnificently, and have been recorded with clarity if not depth. There is a small defect on the first side, where the pitch drops suddenly due to turntable slip-page, but this does not recur. A treasureable issue. —A.R.

VITTORIA: Motets for Unaccompanied Chorus; **Ensemble Vocal M. Conraud.** Les Discophiles Francais set 26; four discs, price \$10.00.

WITH ISSUES such as this Les Discophiles Francais are emerging as one of the finest recording projects in existence. Here we find justice done to one of the most neglected and important composers from the "Golden Age" of polyphony. Contemporary of Palestrina, Vittoria's music shows marked differences from the Italian school. His Spanish temperament—emotional, mystic, and even sensuous—manifests itself in the often impassioned intensity of his music. Harmonically his style is no advance over Palestrina's, but it is in his fervent, soaring melodic curves that we find Vittoria's real originality. Listen, for example, to "Sancta Maria," in which Spanish emotion streams from every phrase. Or to "Vidi Speciosam," where simple, childlike harmonies at the beginning imperceptibly darken and sweep the listener on to an overwhelming climax at the end of the first side, and again in the pounding rhythm of the conclusion.

There is little to add in praise of the Couraud Chorus that has not been said before. Theirs is a model of clean, disciplined singing, with splendid intonation and perfect attacks. Couraud's feeling for the style is impeccable, and his sense of proportion is always just. The recording is faithful to the Discophile standard: excellent clarity, but somewhat shallow. Surfaces are fine. —A.R.





RECORD NOTES AND REVIEWS



BACH: Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor; Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring; Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor; Chorale-Prelude: "Sleepers Awake"; **The Philadelphia Orchestra** conducted by **Eugene Ormandy**. Columbia set MM-846, four discs, price \$5.00.

AS showpieces for this matchless orchestra, these unidentified transcriptions are quite acceptable. As translations of the expressivity of these divers Bach works or as evocations of organ sonori-

ties, they range from tolerable to downright crude. Eugene Ormandy's way of playing them forces one to believe that they are showpieces.

Orchestrating Bach organ pieces is the delight of orchestrators and listeners in these times. In our grandfathers' time, the vogue was orchestrating parts of beloved operas. The game is fair enough, I suppose, if everyone understands the rules at the outset.

The recordings in this set are uneven and the surfaces are unusually noisy for Columbia in all of the selections except the Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor. The recording of this work, by the way, is the only really acceptable one in the album.

-C.J.L.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67; **Boston Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Serge Koussevitzky**. RCA Victor set DM-1313, four discs, price \$6.00.

ONE of the outstanding performances of the year is Koussevitzky's superb recording of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Correctly and beautifully played and conducted, it is as good a performance of this thrice-familiar work as I ever want to hear.

No other recording in the recent past has surprised me more than this one. My sales resistance to a Koussevitzky performance of a Beethoven symphony is usually rather high, for Koussevitzky has often offended me on grounds of musical taste by monkeying around with tempo, dynamics, phrasing, and balance.

This past season, though, I think everyone detected new depths in the great Boston conductor's work. It seemed that he had an even greater mastery over those scores he had always conducted brilliantly and that he had gained keener insight into several works that he had not formerly been so successful with. Listening to the New York concerts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra last season, I felt that Koussevitzky was trying to make his last performances the finest of his career. I believe he succeeded. That he certainly succeeded with the Beethoven Fifth is evident if one compares his older version of the work with this new set.

Follow these records with the score and I believe that you will find Koussevitzky's reading well-nigh letter perfect. But above all, listen to the incredible amount of detail, the exact metric scansion, the proper maintenance of time, and the magnificent sonorities of his inspired orchestra. All of these elements add up to a remarkable traversal of this beloved work—one that should make everyone feel good and warm around the heart. --C.J.L.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125; **Irma Gonzalez** (soprano), **Elena Nikolaidi** (contralto), **Raoul Jobin** (tenor), **Mack Harrell** (baritone), the **Westminster Choir** and the **Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York**, conducted by **Bruno Walter**. Columbia set MM-900, eight discs, price \$9.00.

AT last we have a Beethoven "Ninth" on domestic labels to take the place of the

famous old Weingartner set (Columbia album MM1227) that has served us so well these many years. Perfection is not claimed for this release, as the soloists are not those supermen and women that Beethoven evidently had in mind when he devised the finale, yet it unquestionably represents the best value for the average collector, especially if he be equipped for microgroove playing. Certainly it is head and shoulders above the previous Columbia album, an Ormandy - Philadelphia Orchestra effort (Columbia MM-591) and the recent opposition entry, the Koussevitzky - Boston - Tanglewood debacle (Victor set M-1190).

The only serious competition now available is an imported (and expensive) Columbia recording by Herbert von Karajan and the Vienna Philharmonic with Schwarzkopf, Hoengen, Patzak and Hotter as soloists (English Columbia LX-8612/20). Karajan's interpretation is stolidly solid, neglecting to foster the humanizing aspects of the score, and Hotter is unimpressive as the baritone solist.

Walter does not emphasize the fist-shaking side of Beethoven's character. There is plenty of drama in his reading, yet it has a sunny, personable quality that removes the symphony from its accustomed place on a high, intellectual pedestal. It becomes the uttered voice of every man, as it was intended, rather than a semi-sanctified hymn of reverence to cultivated snobism, which is the way we usually hear it. The orchestra's tone quality matches Walter's concept. It is perfect for a major classical work such as this, avoiding the heavy richness of the Boston and the fruity, hollow mellowness of the Philadelphia.

Of the soloists Harrell is outstanding. Jobin's operatic style sounds a little strange in this company, but the girls manage their parts without too much distress. The Westminster Choir has a tendency to rumble their words. Their singing is spirited, however, and generally on pitch. The recording has been successfully accomplished, with quiet surfaces. --A.W.P.

CHOPIN (arr. KOSTELANETZ): Polonaise, Op. 53, No. 6; Valse Op. 64, No. 2; Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2; Fantasia Impromptu, Op. 66; Etude, Op. 25, No. 7; Valse Brillante, Op. 34, No. 1; Prelude, Op. 28, No. 15; Polonaise Militaire, Op.

40, No. 1; **Andre Kostelanetz and his Orchestra.** Columbia album MM-840, four discs, price \$5, or Microgroove 10-inch disc ML-2056, price \$3.25.

There is lengthy precedent for instrumental versions of Chopin's piano music. The ballet "Les Sylphides" was originally based upon a "Chopiniana Suite" by Glazounov, to which additional numbers were added by Maurice Keller. Since that time, Stravinsky, Vittorio Rieti, Lucien Caillet and Benjamin Britten, among others, have tried their hand at improving upon the original. Another ballet based upon music of Chopin is "La Nuit Ensorcelée," arranged by the French composer Louis Aubert.

I do not believe that we should throw up our hands in horror along with the purists who are insulted by the so-called desecration of the piano originals. In fact, in Chopin's time, it was not unusual for some of the mazurkas to be sung in concert. I do feel that the Kostelanetz arrangements, because of their lush sweetness, do not project with authenticity the moods that Chopin created at the keyboard.

This carefully recorded album is easy listening, however. Kostelanetz's men are top-notch players, rehearsed up to the last inch. One can predict a long and rosy future for the set on late evening "background music" radio programs, for to its accompaniment one could play a game of chess or make out one's income tax without difficulty. If one must have one's Chopin dished up with orchestra, I should think that a "Sylphides" album, such as the Fiedler-Boston Pops (Victor set 1119) would be more agreeable, partly because of associations with visual memories, partly because the sugar content is about one fifth. You will not go wrong with the L.P. version, if you can take this whole program at one sitting. —A.W.P.

COATES: The Three Men Suite, The Three Bears Suite, Dance of the Orange Blossoms; **The New Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Eric Coates.** London LP disc LPS 27, price \$4.95.

This pleasantly innocuous music is understandably popular, when one realizes that there is nothing more successful than a well-made trifle. And there is no getting around it Eric Coates really knows how to turn a cliché. He also knows how to make an orchestra sound inoffen-

sive. Muzak, a company that pipes music into restaurants, should be interested in this record; for it is right up their alley. Neither the music, the performance, or the recording should spoil anyone's digestion. —C.J.L.

DEBUSSEY: Suite from "Pelleas and Melisande" (Arranged by Erich Leinsdorf); **The Cleveland Orchestra** conducted by **Erich Leinsdorf.** Columbia set MM-845, three discs, price \$4.00.

IF Erich Leinsdorf arranged this suite of fragments from Debussy's indescribably beautiful opera because he loves the music and wants to give concert-goers more opportunities to hear some of it (and I think after hearing this set that he did), then we must admire him for his noble feelings and his obvious effort. If he intended it to be a dramatic realization of the opera's essence, then he has failed; for "Pelleas" is such a perfect unit that it can not be telescoped.

Leinsdorf has chosen, however, some lovely orchestral passages that are beautiful as sound even out of context. These include the introduction to the first scene, the orchestral interlude leading into the scene in which the couple meet by "the fountain of the blind," the interlude preceding that scene in which Pelleas and Golaud ascend from the dark vaults, the interlude preceding the final meeting of the lovers, and the music that leads the listener into the touching fifth act.

Leinsdorf has never been successful altogether with French music, because he (like many conductors) has sacrificed perfect metric scansion of rhythm to regular accent or pulsation. "Pelleas" (ideally conducted with virtually no downbeat) would be robbed of its power in this recording if it were not for some surprisingly beautiful balancing of the orchestral sonorities by Leinsdorf and some fine unforced playing by The Cleveland Orchestra. The recording is the finest Columbia has yet made with this organization and the surfaces are quiet. —C.J.L.

ELGAR: Cockaigne Overture, Op. 40 (in London Town), and The Wand of Youth—Suite No. 1; **London Philharmonic Orchestra**, conducted by **Eduard Van Beinum.** London Long-Playing disc 43, price \$5.95

ELGAR'S swaggering Cockney overture has a vulgarity "in terms of the high-

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est art" (Tovey). If you've never seen a group of Cockney exhibitionists, you've seen others like them in local town club celebrations, in carnivals and political parades. Elgar knew the Cockneys and their love of the brass band, and he knew the fun and joy they got out of parades as well as their quiet and more sentimental side. His overture deserves the popularity it has known in England and should be better known in this country, for its essential English characteristics are ones that we can all comprehend and appreciate. Van Beinum's performance is a model of musicianly deportment that conveys an unmistakable appreciation of this part of the English scene.

Elgar's suites from "The Wand of Youth" contain dances and descriptive pieces originally written for a children's play. There is a sort of disarming simplicity and ease to this music that fails to give its gentle whimsy telling meaning. There are some fleeting moments of gentle charm, but Elgar's "Wand of Youth" fails to awaken any fragrant moments of my youth. Perhaps I should have seen the play. The smooth performance of Van Beinum is deserving of praise.

The recording of the "Cockaigne" is splendidly realistic and noteworthy for its vivid instrumental coloring, while that of the suite is bright and clear. Some crackling was apparent on both sides of this disc. The principal material used in London's LPs is known as Geon; though we are given to understand some vinylite is included in the mixture of the dough, which of course accounts for the crackling.

--P.H.R.

HANDEL—HARTY: Suite from the Royal Fireworks Music; **Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra**, conducted by **Sir Malcolm Sargent**. Columbia set MX-319, two discs, price \$3.00, or Microgroove disc ML-4197, coupled with **BRITTEN:** The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, Opus 34. Price \$4.85.

HANDEL wrote his "Royal Fireworks Music" for a festival celebrating the termination of one of Europe's frequent wars. The celebration, held in the spring of 1749 in the Green Park, London, was a howling success, as the main fair building, owing to the eccentric behaviour of some imperfectly fired skyrockets, caught fire and burned to the ground. In the confusion Handel's music was ignored by the

loi-pol-loi, though the band, according to one source, consisted of 16 oboes, 16 bassoons, 40 trumpets, 20 horns, 16 kettle-drums, 12 side drums, miscellaneous flutes and fifes.

Five sections of this work have been arranged for modern orchestra by the late Irish conductor-composer, Sir Hamilton Harty, who added strings and astutely balanced the wind choirs to suit present-day instruments. The London Philharmonic-Harty album (Columbia set MX-51), in which Sir Hamilton knowingly contrasts the solemn pomp of the overture with just the right touch of spritely vigor in the faster sections, has remained definitive to this day. This effort of Sargent's is no real competitor, ancient as the Harty version may be. Much of the advance in recording techniques has been offset by Sargent's failure to achieve clean orchestral balance. In addition, there is doubtful intonation from the trumpets on more than one occasion, and more than a fair share of acidulous string tone.

--A.W.P.

HAYDN: Symphony No. 73 in D major (The Hunt) (5 sides); and **SGAMBATI** (trans. Sevitzyky): Vecchio Minuetto (1 side); **Indianapolis Orchestra**, conducted by **Fabian Sevitzyky**. Victor set DM 1312, three discs, price \$5.75, or set WDM-1312, price \$3.25.

THIS often-played symphony seems to have been neglected by recorders. Its nickname is derived from two horn calls, heard in the finale. This movement was originally written in 1780 as a prelude to the third act of Haydn's opera "La Fedelta premiata," a work described as a "Dramma giocoso." In 1781, Haydn decided to use it in a symphony. Geiringer states that "it is probably due to the fact that Haydn considered the first three movements [of this work] as a sort of introduction to the lovely finale that the first Allegro does not show the maturity and accomplishment to be found in the contemporary Russian Quartets [Opus 33]. Yet it may well have been that Haydn conceived those three movements without thought of the finale, adding the latter at the last moment." The "Hunt" Symphony is well written and pleasantly diverting. Its opening movement reveals sound workmanship and the typical spirit of elevation. The Minuet suggests a rustic dance. The Andante might have been fitted into a string quartet with its song-

ful dignity, complete pieces, revise to suit frame of, atic prelude, only beca, a buoyant listeners.

Sevitzyky's performance of the polished and playful. The play is some of it on record.

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The recording and text (preferably months).

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ful dignity. It is the finale, however, which completely charms—one of those spontaneous pieces that Haydn knew how to devise to send his audiences home in a happy frame of mind. Perhaps he chose his operatic prelude as the tailpiece to this symphony because he believed the work needed a buoyant lift to make it remembered by listeners.

Sevitzky gives a well-ordered performance of this work. It has refinement and polish and conveys careful preparation. The playing of the Indianapolis Orchestra is some of the best work I have heard from it on records.

The well known piano piece of Giovanni Sgambati (1841-1914) fails to impress me in this transcription. The performance tends to soggianness due to an overly slow tempo.

The recording is clear and clean in tone and texture, and the surfaces of the 78s (preferred by us) are some of the best in months from Victor. --P.H.R.

HINDEMITH: Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber; **The Cleveland Orchestra**, conducted by **George Szell**. Columbia Long-Playing disc ML-4177 (coupled with Hindemith's "Nobilissima Visione"), price \$4.85.

HINDEMITH is to say the least extremely clever and, one is tempted to say, unpredictable. After the "Nobilissima Visione" and a recent symphony (heard in the concert hall), the present score finds him off on another foot entirely. The title is ingenious as well as explicit, for this handling of thematic material, chosen from lesser known works of Weber, is as Webster says a true "passing from one form or shape into another."

There is a lot of charm to this music, as much—in my estimation—as Hindemith has evidenced anywhere. It is a brilliant, gay, showy score, with dance tunes, lots of bounce and a jazz fugue. This is music so filled with pleasant and truly diverting surprises that description is not required. Indeed, one should experience it unprepared. It's that kind of a work. Needless to say, the "masterful shipshapeness" of the composer's contrapuntal abilities is apparent, but its cheerful and buoyant spirit preclude concentration on its workmanship.

Szell handles this music expertly with admirable understanding of its various appeals. The recording is excellent, cleaner and clearer in detail than the "Nobilissima Visione." --P.H.R.

JAERNEFELT: Praeludium and Berceuse; **City of Birmingham Orchestra**, conducted by **George Weldon**. Columbia 10-inch disc 17590-D, 75c.

The Finnish composer, Armas Jaernefelt, is best known by these little orchestral pieces, which owe their interest more to colorful orchestrations than to musical substance. Weldon's performances are calculated to reveal the colorful scoring—very bright in the Praeludium and mellow in the Berceuse. His handling of the latter piece is both sensitive and tender. By far the best versions on records. Realistically reproduced. --P.G.

LECUONA: Andalucia; La Comparsa; Malaguena; Jungle Drums; **The Robin Hood Dell Orchestra**, conducted by **Morton Gould**. Columbia set MX-318, two discs, price \$2.50.

ERNESTO LECUONA, the grand old man of Cuban music (he is only fifty-three), fills a place in Cuba's life comparable to that of Sibelius in Finland. When I was last in Havana, they were having a week-long festival of his music that was the outstanding event of the summer season. The tunes in this album are among his best known; they need no further comment.

The Robin Hood Dell Orchestra, actually the Philadelphia stripped of its affluent members and operating on a summer pay schedule, plays well enough under Gould, who is evidently out to beat Kostelanetz at his own game. He does not, however, have the rehearsal ability of a Kostelanetz nor the showmanship of a Raymond Paige. These performances are rhythmically sloppy; they lack excitement. Xavier Cugat does this sort of thing best. --A.W.P.

IORTZING: Czar and Carpenter—The Wooden Shoe Dance; and **SMETANA:** The Bartered Bride—Furiant. Capitol-Telefunken disc 89-80131, price \$1.25. **SIBELIUS:** Valse triste; and **SCHMIDT:** Notre Dame—Intermezzo. Capitol-Telefunken disc 89-80132, price \$1.25. Both played by **Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra**, conducted by **Hans Schmidt-Isserstadt**.

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The Record Hunter

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Schmidt-Isserstadt is a gifted conductor with an admirable feeling for color and effect. Such familiar items as the Smetana "Furiant" and the Sibelius "Valse Triste" are handled smoothly and expressively. Were the recording more vital and realistic, his performances would challenge those of Beecham. But in the case of the "Furiant," the English conductor has with the aid of superior recording produced a far more exciting performance. "The Wooden Shoe Dance" recommends the present record. It is not as spontaneous a piece as the Smetana but it has humor and typical character.

Franz Schmidt (born 1874) is an Austrian conductor, whose opera "Notre Dame" (1914) seems to have enjoyed some success in his native land and undoubtedly in Germany where this disc was made. As the intermezzo shows a gift for dramatic intensity, one would like to relate it to the operatic scene. (The opera is based on the well known novel of Victor Hugo.) Patently theatrical, this music has an Italianate quality to it, suggesting an Austrian Puccini. As a recording, it is more striking than any of the others. --P.H.R.

SCHUMANN: Symphony No. 4 in D minor, Opus 120; **Philharmonic Orchestra of Prague**, conducted by **Josef Keilberth**. Mercury Long-playing 10" disc MG-15001, price \$3.85.

ONE can find little to pick apart in this record. Every one involved does his bit with gracious competence, except perhaps the engineer who transferred the work to the long-playing disc. He has permitted the sound intensity to fluctuate here and there, but this is not a serious fault and should not interfere with the enjoyment of the music.

This orchestra is apparently not Talich's Czech Philharmonic, but rather a German organization that operated in Prague during the war. Concerning the conductor I have no information, scandal, or gossip. He is evidently a well-routined musician, inclined to be a bit over-sentimental in the slow movement, mindful of his duties in the more spirited parts.

In comparing this release with the recent Cleveland Orchestra - Szell version (Columbia set MM-821 or Microgroove disc ML-2040), one finds that Szell is impersonal, almost brusque in his approach. His orchestra sounds bright, clean and dry. The German group has a warmer,

richer tone quality. They give a more dramatic impact to the valiant utterances of the finale, producing their sounds powerfully, but without a sense of strain. Both readings have their virtues, and while I would like to make a definite statement in favor of one or the other, in all fairness I have no urge to do so. Better listen to both and make your own choice; they cost the same. --A.W.P.

STRAUSS, Joh. Jr.: On the Beautiful Danube; **Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra**, conducted by **Clemens Krauss**. Capital-Telefunken disc 89-80129, price \$1.25.

The Viennese-born Krauss plays this waltz in a rather heavy-handed, langorous manner. Though his emphasis on rubato preserves the Viennese lilt, the irresistible sentiment of the music is not made really apparent. The recording is somewhat dull and lacking in needed vitality. --P.H.R.

STRAUSS, Joh. Jr.: Tales from the Vienna Woods; Intermezzo from 1001 Nights; **Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra**, conducted by **Alois Melichar**, and **STRAUSS, Josef:** Village Swallows; same orchestra, conducted by **Erich Kleiber**. Mercury Long-Playing disc (10") MG 15004, price \$3.95.

These recordings, dating from the late 1930s, have been excellently dubbed by Mercury. The reproduction, accomplished by the Reeves-Fairchild Margin Control Process, is an advance over the original recordings, all of which are in our own collection. Melichar's "Tales from the Vienna Woods" has long been in demand as the only existent version of this waltz on record employing the original score with zither solos. Melichar's performance is an enjoyable one, though lacking in the carefree lilt of the true Viennese spirit. The disc is recommendable nonetheless as it contains one of Kleiber's affectionate performances of a Viennese waltz.

--P.H.R.

VON EINEM: Concerto for Orchestra, Opus 4; **The Saxonian State Orchestra**, conducted by **Karl Elmendorf**. Deutsche Gramophone set DGS-10, three discs, price \$8.50.

VON EINEM made the news dispatches briefly in 1947, when his opera "Dantons Tod" was produced at the Salzburg festival. Apparently the work was notable solely because of its fabulous difficulty and the innumerable rehearsals necessary to its mounting. When finally performed, the

opera met with churlish opprobrium from reporting listeners.

It was with considerable trepidation, therefore, that the contents of this album were placed on my turntable. Preparations included turning up the lights and making ready sleeping draughts to combat possible nightmares. Early fears proved unfounded, however; this is undistinguished but harmless stuff, no better and no worse than much of our American composers' output. One detects the logical result of an unimaginative personality, trained in 19th-century traditions, trying to write a piece in keeping with the 20th-century tempo hurtling by his window—such stuff as some of our highly touted movie composers might have written, had they remained in their native Germany. —A.W.P.

WAGNER: The Flying Dutchman—Overture; **Boston Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Serge Koussevitzky**. Victor disc 12-0958, price \$1.25, or 7" 49-0473, price 95c.

SUMPTUOUS sound and perfection of orchestral playing in this recording will endear it to the hearts of Koussevitzky's admirers. While most conductors take three sides to play this work, some (Richard Strauss, Schuricht, and Mengelberg, to name a few) speed up the music like Koussevitzky, thus fitting it to two sides. This latter treatment relates the work to the concert hall rather than to the theatre. Beecham's performance (on three sides) is more dramatically imposing and more closely related to the story. His treatment, for example, of the "Salvation" theme conveys a greater yearning for rest and is therefore more cogent. Muck played the work in a similar manner. Those who except the vehicle apart from the opera (which has never enjoyed great popularity) will be unconcerned with its theatrical connotations and probably more given to acceptance of a performance like this one. As orchestral playing it will not disappoint. —P.H.R.

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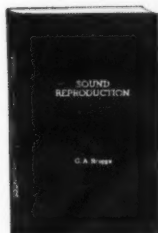
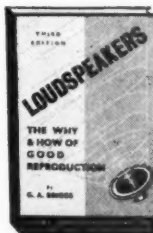
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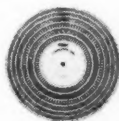
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Long Playing Re-Issues

COLUMBIA'S August list of LP discs is headed by the first long-playing version of Verdi's *La Traviata* (set SL-103, 3 discs, price \$14.55). This performance, first issued in August 1947, can hardly be rated as a first-class one. Though the young singers in the leading roles have attributes they do not make the most of them. All sing with youthful fervor but with little regard for the composer's dynamic markings. Generally speaking, everything is on the forte side and pianissimo markings are ignored. In the LP version, the voice of **Guerrini** (the Violetta) seems at times more strident than we recall it from the 78 records. Perhaps adjustment of high controls can mitigate this. **Infantino** brings a sort of boyish quality to his Alfredo which makes up for his lack of a true sense of style. **Silvieri**, blessed with a fine voice, is hardly the sedate father, and his singing of "Di Provenza il mar" remains more distinguished in a single disc issue he made later. **Bellezza's** Orchestral direction is praiseworthy and the minor characters and the chorus are competent. The realism of the LP version heightens the static positions of the singers, all of whom seem to hug the microphone. There is no feeling of listening to an actual performance with characters constantly changing their positions.

A Debussy LP

The **Laura Newell, Milton Katims, John Wummer** performance of Debussy's attractive *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp* is coupled on LP disc ML-4090 (\$4.85) with the **Leinsdorf** arranged suite from the composer's opera, *Pelleas and Melisande*, (the latter is discussed elsewhere in this issue). The instrumental coloring of the sonata is heightened in the LP version.

Arrau's introspective performances of the six pieces from **Albeniz's** Books I and II of *Iberia* are exceptionally well handled in the LP dubbing. The tone of the piano is realistic and cogent.

The **Mitropoulos—Minneapolis Symphony** performances of **Rachmaninoff's** *Isle of the Dead* and **Vaughan Williams's** *Fantasia on a Theme of Tallis* are coupled on disc ML 4196 (\$4.85). One can hardly imagine two more incongruous bedfellows

but if the folks who purchase the disc for the **Rachmaninoff** eventually learn to appreciate the "stained-glass" poetic qualities of the **Vaughan Williams**, the coupling will be justified. Neither performance is the best on records, though both have their attributes. The LP dubbing has a bolder quality than the 78 versions.

Mr. Biggs's sober performances of **French Organ Music** (disc ML 4195, \$4.85) have been successfully dubbed.

Traubel in Lighter Fare

The disc containing **Popular Ballads and Negro Spirituals**, sung by **Helen Traubel** (ML 4221, \$4.85) reveals the soprano in roles which others assumed more naturally. Undoubtedly, her admirers will endorse this record.

Though by no means as exciting as the recent **Stokowski** performance, the new **Rodzinski-Philharmonic Symphony** version of **Enesco's Roumanian Rhapsody No. 1** is a cleancut, musicianly treatment of this popular score, backed by exceptionally fine recording (disc ML 2057, 10", price \$3.85). It is coupled with the conductor's previously-issued performance of the **Liszt Mephisto Waltz**, which emerges from the LP in a more brilliant reproduction than the 78. In our estimation, this is one of Columbia's finest LP treatments of the symphony orchestra.

Ezio Pinza in Operatic Arias (disc ML 2060, 10", \$3.85) is a grouping of recent recordings of arias from **Norma**, **The Barber of Seville**, **La Boheme**, **Simon Boccanegra**, and **Don Carlos**. It also contains a new recording of the aria *Si la rigueur et la vengeance* from **Halevy's La Juive**, which will assuredly be welcomed by the basso's many admirers. The Pinza voice emerges from this recording in a realistic manner though with some edgy tonal qualities. Reduction of high control serves the record best.

Most welcome in its LP version is **Britten's Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell**, known under the title of **Young People's Guide to the Orchestra** (disc ML 4197, \$4.85). The dubbing is excellent and the reproduction of the ingenious display of the instruments of the orchestra remains convincing. The rough-and-ready **Sargent-Liverpool Philharmonic** performance of the **Handel Royal Fireworks Music Suite**, reviewed elsewhere, is hardly an acceptable coupling.

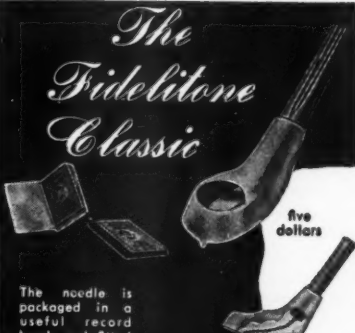
A number of readers have written to inform us that Mercury released the **Mengelberg** performance of Tchaikovsky's **1812 Overture** on 78 rpm discs prior to its LP version. Be that as it may, neither Mercury's nor Capitol's 78 versions quite equal the new LP release, where Mercury has had the benefit of the Reeves-Fairchild Margin Control technique. There is a greater overall clarity of line and better climatic effects from the LP. It is coupled, as we previously stated, with Mengelberg's late pre-war recording of Strauss's tone poem, **Don Juan**. Mengelberg's treatment of **Don Juan** is far too personalized for the work's own good; his consistent alterations of tempi destroy the musical continuity. Columbia would do well to give us an LP version of the Galliero version which English critics have praised so highly.

Most gratifying is London Gramophone's issue of the **Van Beinum-Concertgebouw Orchestra** version of Bartok's **Concerto for Orchestra** (disc LLP 5, \$5.95). The recording is realistically satisfying with none of the stridency of tone found in the Reiner-Columbia version. Though Reiner gives a more vital and intense performance, Van Beinum's treatment of this score is an exemplary one in style and taste, and warmly lyrical as well as meaningful. It is a performance which may well make the work more immediately accessible to the greater number of listeners. No one should neglect to hear this work; it reveals a warmer, less formidable Bartok whose style mellowed in his later years.

Two Operas on LP

Cetra Soria has released the prior-to-the-war Parlophone recording of the complete performance of Bellini's opera, **Norma**, (LP set 1204, 3 discs, \$17.85). The dubbing is an excellent one, though the level is rather low. Turning the controls up, however, does not make for surface sound except in a few spots where the original Parlophone 78s were remiss. Though scarcely a first-rate performance of the opera with the many inequalities of **Gina Cigna's Norma** and the often flabby conducting of **Gui**, the set nonetheless is welcome in an LP version. The tenor **Breviario** is a competent and virile voiced Pollione, **Tancredi Pasero** a rich voiced Orov-escio, and **Ebe Stignani** a forceful and expressive Adalgisa.

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Cetra's LP version of Mascagni's **L'Amico Fritz** (set LP 1203, 2 discs, \$11.90) is also an excellent dubbing. This sentimental, pastoral opera boasts the tenor **Tagliavini's** best singing on records and an unusually warm and tender portrayal of the gentle heroine by his wife, **Pia Tassinari**. With **Mascagni** at the orchestral helm and an all-around competent handling of the other roles, the set is slated for recording history.

The **Alexander Sved** and **Lina Pagliughi** album of Arias and Duets from Verdi's **Rigoletto** has been successfully transferred to one LP disc (Cetra 50003, \$5.95). **Sved's** dark, often opaque voice is heard at its best and **Pagliughi** confirms her position as one of the foremost coloratura sopranos of our time.

The Cetra recording of Vivaldi's **The Four Seasons**, in the performance of the **St. Cecilia Academy Orchestra** directed by **Molinari**, has been issued on one LP disc, 50004, \$5.95. Though **Molinari** tends to sentimentalize some sections of this score, this version remains preferable to the Concert Hall one where **Louis Kaufman's** single violin, in place of Vivaldi's two original featured violins, remains too aggressive for the good of the music. The dubbing is most effectively achieved.

Vox has reissued the **Gaby Casadesus—Paul Paray** performance of Mozart's **Piano Concerto in E flat, K. 271** on one LP disc (VLP 6500, \$5.95). This proves to be a first-rate dubbing job, with sufficient tonal realism to make the performance enjoyable. **Vox** has a long list of long-playing recordings which we expect to report on later, including those most worthwhile issues—**Leonard Shure's** performance of Beethoven's **Variations on a Theme of Diabelli** (a work that will be well served by unbroken listening) and the **Pro Musica Chamber Group's** excellent traversal of Mendelssohn's inimitable **Octet in E Flat, Op. 20**, also the wonderful **Gloria Mass** of Vivaldi.



MOZART: Concerto in F major, K. 413: Arthur Balsam (piano) with the **Concert Hall Symphony** and **Variations on a Minuetto** by **Salieri; Arthur Balsam**

(piano). **Orchestra, conducted by Henry Swoboda, Concert Hall Limited Edition set C-8 (Third Series).**

MOZART: Concerto in B flat, K. 450; Andor Foldes (piano) with **Lamoureux Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Bigot. Vox Long-Playing disc VLP 6580, price \$5.95.**

IT seems a pity that the advent of the F major Concerto on records has been reserved by Concert Hall for its subscribers. One can only hope that this condition will be remedied with an L.P. version for general distribution. Of the three works that Mozart wrote for his own use in Vienna only the A major Concerto, K. 414 has greatly attracted pianists. The neglect of the F major and the C major (K. 415) concertos is undeserved. The F major has its own particular allure, it is a wholly agreeable opus throughout, with considerable solo work for the pianist. The second movement is a larghetto of poetic charm, reminiscent in part of tender songful utterances of Mozart's operatic ladies. The "style galant" prevails throughout the work with continual embellishments of line and phrase. It brings to mind a Watteau painting with its naive and pastoral qualities, though its finale—a rondo, marked Tempo di Minuetto—with its more meaningful contrapuntal writing owns greater substance.

The performance is one of grace and refinement. **Balsam** plays with a light-fingered technique and consistent polish; **Swoboda** handles the orchestra adroitly and shapes his phrases expressively. The orchestra is a small one of fitting size for an intimate performance which preserves the prevailing amiability of the music.

The B flat Concerto, made of strong stuff, is almost too well known to dwell upon. It is planned on more symphonic lines and its piano part is more brilliant. It has been recorded twice before—by **Elly Ney** and by **Kathleen Long**. **Foldes** is an exceptionally gifted pianist (few of us have forgotten his accompanying work with **Szigeti**). His is an introspective performance of this concerto—efficient, precise, and expressive. **Bigot** gives him a competent and vital orchestral background, and the recording is eminently satisfactory, if not extended range. The breaks in the original 78 version were not handled smoothly in the first LP disc

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issued by Vox, but this has been rectified in a later version. If you acquire a first pressing and find the slight break in continuity disturbing it is our understanding that Vox will exchange your record.

-P.H.R.

SAINT-SAËNS: Concerto No. 3 in B minor, Op. 61; and **RAVEL:** Tzigane; **Ruggero Ricci** (violin) and **Lamoureux Orch.** conducted by **Eugene Bigot.** Vox L.P. disc 6240, price \$4.85.

SOMEONE once said that Saint-Saëns' eclecticism and urbanity preclude pronounced personal convictions. His concertos were written to please. They are the work of a well bred Gallic gentlemen, who one expects kept his boots shined highly. The technical glitter might have been inspired by the prismatic play of a crystal chandelier. The artistry is always elegant and polished but rather rarefied in spots. Usually, as in the above concerto, he gives his soloist a good workout; and for this reason, I have found that interest in his concertos is dependent upon the excellence of the solo performer.

Of the several versions of this concerto on records, the present one proves as en-

tertaining and a artistically persuasive as any. Its recording is quite satisfactory, if not of extended range. But young Ricci is an extraordinarily alive violinist with warm-hued tone and technical competence. His playing has an ease and assurance that focuses the listener's attention on his work. Somehow, Bigot—for all his competence — seems a figure in the background, but one senses at times his co-operative spirit in the shaping of melodies.

After the last bars of the concerto in a typical Saint-Saëns brilliant and dashing finale, we hear, after appropriate pause, a splendid performance of Ravel's virtuosic play with gypsy melodies. Generally, this work is played with piano accompaniment, but here, the composer's orchestration—which lends more subtle coloring, is used. Though the Francescatti version of this work (Columbia disc 72771-D) remains the most searching rendition on records, young Ricci plays with such technical assurance and rich feeling that one is momentarily carried away by his artistry. His performance of a difficult work is one which deserves to be heard. One suspects the gentle touch of sentiment he brings to parts of the score will appeal to many. —P.H.R.

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- ▲ Wally Butterworth, conductor of "Voices That Live" on the ABC Network, has just released for sale a special RCA Victor Red Seal pressing of the "Coat Song" (Vecchia zimarra) from La Boheme, sung by Caruso in the original bass key.
- ▲ This fabulous recording, lost for 33 years, was made at Camden on Feb. 10, 1916. Caruso's voice was never more faithfully and beautifully reproduced. On the reverse side of the record, Mme. Frances Alda (Caruso's Mimi on the occasion of his singing this aria) tells how the record came to be made.
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BACH: A German Organ Mass (from the Third Volume of the Klavierübung); **Fritz Heitmann, organist.** Capitol-Telefunken set EFL-8029, six discs, price \$8.75.

WHEN I first listened to these records around a decade ago, I felt that I had never before heard such superb organ playing and recording. I still feel the same way about Fritz Heitmann's playing after rehearsing the set, and the recording is, even by today's standards, a splendid one.

The music, called "A German Organ Mass" because of the arrangement of its eleven parts, is one of the richest jewels in Bach's musical diadem. It consists of a Prelude in E Flat, a Kyrie, a Gloria, five choral preludes that have as their basis appropriate Lutheran hymns, a Duetto, and a Fugue in E Flat (the celebrated "St. Ann's"). Noble, exalted, and profound, this music is a sublime glorification of the basic dogma of Lutheran Christianity.

A special word must be reserved for the magnificent instrument on which Mr. Heitmann works his miracles. It is the Arp Schnitger Organ in the Eosander Chapel of the Charlottenburg Palace in Berlin that was built by order of Friedrich I of Prussia in 1706.

—C.J.L.

SCARLATTI: Sonatas in D (L. 461), in B flat (L. 497), in F minor (L. 382), in F major (L. Supp. 20); **Wanda Landowska** (harpsichord). Victor 7-inch disc 49-0476, price 95c.

This little disc, announced for issue on July 5th as a memento of the artist (who on that date celebrated her seventy-second birthday) was not received until near the end of August. It seems rather strange that Victor did not re-issue the Society album of 20 Scarlatti sonatas, made by Mme. Landowska prior to the war, instead of this record. It has always seemed to me that Landowska's recordings, made at that time, evidenced a more intimate and expressive artistry than her later ones accomplished in this country. For this reason, her earlier version of the Bach "Goldberg Variations," along with her Scarlatti

sonatas, her Couperin and Rameau albums remain rich harvests for the listener. There are tonal nuances in the old performances missing in her more blatantly recorded, modern ones. Executively, she remains one of the wizards of our age. Her playing, as Virgil Thomson has said, is "as stimulating as a needle shower," which in itself can be both thrilling and satisfying. For those who do not own her earlier album, this little disc will be especially cherishable. I believe there is a 78 version, but I have no information on it at hand.

—P.H.R.



GILBERT-SULLIVAN: Trial by Jury; The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company with The New Promenade Orchestra conducted by **Isadore Godfrey.** London LP disc LLP 70, price \$5.95.

AS performers of Gilbert-Sullivan operas, The D'Oyly Carte Company holds a position second to none. For almost a century it has set the standards for performing these works and steadfastly upheld its traditions.

In creating such an enviable record the company has not depended on outstanding voices. It has rather cultivated a perfect style that has been maintained by keeping the same well-drilled casts together performance in and performance out. Playing together so often has given the players an incomparable sense of teamwork that has unquestionably enriched their understanding of the problems entailed in communicating a Gilbert-Sullivan opera.

It is, therefore, wonderful news that London Gramophone Corporation has asked this superlative company to record the major portion of its repertory.

The first release in this series is "Trial by Jury," a work (without spoken dialogue) well-calculated to show off the advantages of LP record. It is a splendid burlesque of court procedure as fresh and as telling today as it has ever been.

The performance is first class and the recording, except for some wiry sound in loud passages for chorus, is of similar merit. Savoyards, stand up and cheer!

—C.J.L.

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MARSCHNER: Hans Heiling—An jenem Tag; **NESSLER:** Der Trompeter von Säckingen—Behüt dich Gott. **Heinrich Schlusnus** (baritone) with **Berlin State Opera Orchestra**. Deutsche Grammophon 67191, price \$2.50.

▲ This recording is an old friend, once before issued in this country on the ill-fated Polydor-Brunswick series sponsored by Columbia in the late thirties. Its chief distinction lies in presenting a stunning performance of the air by which Marschner's name is occasionally remembered. I suspect this piece might be more popular but that it offers insuperable difficulties to the run-of-the-mill baritone; it takes a phenomenal voice like that of Schlusnus to master its awkward "tessitura." Of course Schlusnus does more than that, singing the repeated declaration, "Ich liebe dich," with the fine sweep and conviction that were among the best assets of his heyday. The companion number, a deep-rooted favorite with sentimentally-inclined Germans, is also excellently done, though I do not thank the singer for the high ending, or the orchestral trumpet player who, in a postlude, wrings the last drop of pathos from Nessler's lush melody. The recording, being older, is less impressive than that of other current Deutsche Grammophon releases, but it has plenty of fullness and power. —P. L. M.

MARSHALL: I Hear You Calling Me; and **LEHAR:** Yours Is My Heart Alone; **James Melton** (tenor) with **RCA Victor Orchestra**, conducted by **Frank Black**. Victor 10-inch disc 10-1472, price \$1.00, or 7-inch disc 49-0420, price 95c.

PERHAPS the late John McCormack should not have set a precedent in his artistic singing of "I Hear You Calling Me," for no tenor since McCormack has sung this song as persuasively. Melton makes no contrasts in tone or dynamics in the three verses. Where McCormack sang "pianissimo" in the last verse, Melton sings "forte-forte." In the Lehar selection, Melton sings with a nasal tone that remains distressing to me. Maybe this is effortless and manly singing, but memories of McCormack and Tauber retard my appreciation of it. Very forward, clear recording. —J.N.

MASCAGNI: Cavalleria Rusticana—Siciliano; and **PUCCINI:** Manon Lescaut—Donna non vide mai; **Jussi Bjoerling** (tenor) with orchestra, conducted by **Nils Grevillius**. Victor 10-inch disc 10-

1411, price \$1.00, or 7-inch disc 49-0475, price 95c.

Bjoerling is an uneven singer but there is true beauty in his voice. This is borne out in the first half of "Donna non vide mai" and much of the "Siciliano." His tonal blatancy at the end of the Puccini aria is more vulgar than artistic—a bid for demonstration from the claque in the opera house but bad judgment for a recording. Yet, there is much to be admired for his singing of these arias and more than a reminder that he is still one of the foremost

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tenors of our time. The orchestral accompaniments are excellent and the recording, made in Europe, well balanced and lifelike.

-J.N.

MOZART: Die Entführung aus dem Serail — Konstanze, Konstanze, dich wiederzusehn; **TCHAIKOVSKY:** Eugen Onegin — Wohin seid ihr entschwunden? **Walther Ludwig** (tenor) with **Munich State Opera Orchestra**, conducted by **Ferdinand Leitner**. Deutsche Grammophon 68295, price \$2.50.

▲ This is Ludwig's second recording of the "Entführung" aria, and a more light and lyrical performance than that he gave on HMV EH 957. It benefits, too, by a fuller and richer orchestra. If the tenor's voice seems a little less robust than formerly, this is all to the good, for he has lost none of his vocal skill, and his sense of Mozart style has ripened. The favorite Tchaikovsky air is cleanly done and tonally equally appealing.

—P. L. M.

STRAUSS: Salome—Final Scene; **Lisette Enck** (soprano) with **Berlin State Opera Orchestra**, conducted by **Robert Heger**. Capitol-Telefunken set EBL-8030, 2 discs, price \$3.75.

WITH all due regard to Mme. Enck's physical prowess as a singer, she does not project this scene as skillfully and tellingly as Mme. Welitsch. Enck's voice is constantly taxed by the greuling tessitura, resulting in excessive vibrato and spread high tones. Perhaps, as claimed, she has gained a reputation for her interpretation of the role on the Continent; but it may be that her histrionic abilities and stage presence have been the reasons for her success.

On records, however, she fails to measure up to Welitsch, whose steadier and better placed voice achieves miracles in this music. Welitsch, more than any one I can recall, realizes the primitive characteristics of Salome. Hers is a sensuous savagery that both thrills and revolts. Enck tends to romanticize her characterization, thus weakening the intended effect of the scene. If the missing voice of Herod was disappointing in the Welitsch recording, the abrupt ending chosen in this performance is almost frustrating. Heger stops just before Herod's command to the soldiers, thus omitting that psychologically fitting climax with its screaming trumpets.

No true operatic enthusiast can condone this loss.

Heger handles the orchestral reins in a competent and telling manner, but he fails to achieve the intensity that is Reiner's triumph. Five years ago this recording would have been hailed as a major fulfillment, but it is definitely eclipsed by the domestic Columbia release—one of the greatest recordings that company made in this country.

-P.H.R.

WAGNER: Lohengrin—Mein Herr und Gott; Der Fliegende Holländer—Mögest du, mein Kind. **George Hann** (basso) with **Berlin State Opera Orchestra**, conducted by **Orthur Rother**. Deutsche Grammophon 67942, price \$2.50.

▲ The "Lohengrin Prayer" shows George Hann (the excellent Kaspar in the "Freischütz" album) as a well routined Wagnerian of ample voice and acceptable style. His is a definitely earthly king, perhaps a little business-like and not oppressively noble. Indeed the outstanding thing on this side of the disc is the fine brassy background provided by the orchestra. Turning the garrulous music that characterizes Senta's sea-going father finds the singer right in his element, and he plays the part for all it is worth. This little sung aria makes a real addition to the domestic lists. The recording is excellent.

—P. L. M.

WAGNER: Rienzi — In seiner Blüte bleicht mein Leben; **KIENZL:** Der Evangelimann—O schöne Jugendtage. **Georgine von Milnikovic** (contralto) with **Deutsches Opernhaus Orchestra**, conducted by **Heinrich Hollreiser**. Deutsche Grammophon 68294, price \$2.50.

▲ This contralto being new to me, I anticipated more than a little pleasure in hearing the Rienzi piece in an unfamiliar voice. What I heard, unfortunately, was distinctly disappointing, for I found neither vocal neatness nor musical charm in her singing — shades of Schumann-Heink and Edyth Walker! The final dramatic section of the air proved to be anything but comfortable listening. The nostalgic slow waltz tune from Kienzl's opera is considerably better sung, but still lacks tonal richness and is rather cumbersome in style. A little rhythmic lift would have made immeasurable difference. The B-side of the disc reproduced excellently, but I suspect the A may be found generally troublesome toward the center.

—P. L. M.

In The Popular Vein

Enzo Archetti

More College Medleys; Jan Garber and His Orchestra. Vocals by The Ensemble. Capital CC-173, 3-10'.

● About a year ago, Capital issued Jan Garber's first album of college medleys. It was very effective and very successful. So is this album. While some less familiar college songs are included in this set, there are also some great and stirring ones like "On, Wisconsin" and the Notre Dame Victory March. Represented too are Northwestern, University of Minnesota, Illinois, Ohio State, University of Texas, Iowa State, Indiana, Purdue, Michigan, and Michigan State.

Strictly Dance Music; Victor Silvester and His Ballroom Orchestra. Columbia Album C-183; 4-10'.

● There's been a long-felt want for something like this - a collection of all-orchestral, strictly in tempo pieces for dancing. Excellent for parties, practice, or even listening. The eight numbers, all tied and true are arranged as four quick-steps and four slow fox trots. Excellently done.

Square Dances With Calls; Cliffie Stone and His Square Dance Band. Capital Album CD-4006, 4-10' discs. **Square Dances** (without calls); Spade Cooley and His Band. Victor Album P-249, 3-10' discs. **Ocean Waves and Texas Star** (with calls); Tex Williams and His Western Caravan. Capital 79-40200 (12"). **"Les Gotcher" Hash and The New Wagoner;** Les Gotcher, caller, with Music by Cliffie Stone, bass; Russ Gotcher, guitar; Herman the Hermit, banjo; Wade Ray, violin; Billy Leibert, accordion. Capital 57-40209.

● These recordings are the result of the sensational revival in interest in the square dance now sweeping the country—a welcome and healthy sign and a national reaction to the confused cacophony known as bop. The Cliffie Stone album sounds the most authentic in style. In addition, it is more useful because one whole record side is taken by Stone for a spoken ex-

planation of various square dance figures and instructions for dancing them. This, when used with the booklet of written calls and instructions, makes clear even to a novice the whole business of square dancing. All tunes used for the seven figures are traditional.

The Spade Cooley album has six traditional tunes (arranged by Cooley) without calls. The assumption being, of course, everyone knows the dances and calls. All have splendid verve and none duplicates anything in the Stone album.

Both singles are equally good. Les Gotcher's calling is a bit more breathless than Jonesy's (in the Stone album) but it's very exciting. His "The New Wagoner" duplicates "Wagonner" in the Cooley set. The "Hash" side is a mixture of figures which only experienced dancers can manage. The tempo accelerates excitingly. Both the music and Tex Williams' calling in the other disc have a definite Western accent. The tunes used on all four sides are marked traditional. Recording throughout is excellent.

If the square dance fever has caught you, you will want all these records. If

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WANTED: Wilhelm Bachaus, piano; Victor M-202, DM463, 14516. Elisabeth Schumann, soprano; Victor M-383, M-497, DM-664, 7707, 1764, 15735, 14815, 14076, 1431. E. D. Callahan, 842 N. Keystone Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

you must choose—the Cliffie Stone should come first.

Happy Holidays; Ray Noble and His Orchestra, with Cathy and Elliot Lewis. Columbia Album C-184, 4-10".

● This is "A Musical Story" similar to "Happy Anniversary" which this same group also made for Columbia a little over a year ago. In this series of sketches built around musical themes, the happily married couple recall certain favorite holidays and re-enact them in good radio sketch style, with sound effects. The results are very entertaining. And not the least part of this album are the pelucid Noble arrangements of things like "The Very Thought of You," "In the Still of the Night," "April in Paris," "Great Day," "Aul Lang Syne," and several other good tunes.

Date With Jane Powell; Jane Powell, with Orchestra conducted by Carmen Dragon. Columbia MM-835, 3-10".

● Jane Powell is easy to look at and delightful to listen to on the screen, but on discs there is no pretty face or pert smile to mitigate the sound emanating from the grooves. The voice is thin, without body, often forced, and practically non-existent on the high notes. This will probably not discourage her fans from buying this album but anyone else who is interested in "The Donkey Serenade," "Sweethearts," "Mighty Lak' A Rose," etc. will do much better elsewhere. The accompaniments are non-committal but the recording is good.

Silver Lining Songs; Vaughan Monroe and His Orchestra, with The Moon Men and Chorus. Victor Album P-246, 3-10".

● Monroe has selected six songs heard in the film "Look for the Silver Lining," each representing a highlight in the action of the picture, playing them in arrangements used in the film. All are sung by V. M. and/or The Moon Men, with chorus. If you like typical Monroe treatments, you will like these discs. The recordings are excellent.

Miss Liberty; Original Broadway Cast. Columbia Album MM-860, 6-10".

● We've had plenty of opportunity to judge fragments of the music from this latest Irving Berlin musical through the many miscellaneous recordings which have

been issued in the past three months, some even prior to the New York opening of the show. The impression has been that the score is uneven, not up to Berlin's best, and not equal to "Kiss Me, Kate" or "South Pacific" with which it competes on Broadway.

Now we have virtually the complete score, the original cast including Eddie Albert, Allyn McLerie, Mary McCarthy, and the theatre orchestra and chorus conducted by Jay Blackton - another "first" for Columbia. The original impression about the score in comparison with its two closest rivals remains unchanged. But a hearing of the entire show has revealed "Miss Liberty" to be a musical comedy of considerable charm, with an infectious gaiety. Although the individual singing is generally not as good as on some singles available elsewhere, the cast is so obviously enjoying itself romping through the book and score that it succeeds in imparting its enthusiasm to the listener. By the time the last side is played, one is convinced that the show is worthwhile, even if it isn't perfect. Columbia has done a splendid job of recording.

Mary Martin Sings For You; Mary Martin, with Orchestra conducted by Lehman Engel. Columbia MM-843, 4-10".

● With "South Pacific" such a resounding success, a success to which Mary Martin has contributed in no small measure by her personal wit, charm, beauty, and voice, it is only natural that Columbia should wish to make hay while the sun shines. Hence, this album of songs from various Broadway shows, chosen not necessarily because they are popular, but rather because of their quality as songs of a certain genre. The set contains Gershwin's "Maybe" and "But Not For Me"; Dietz's "I See Your Face Before Me"; Berlin's "It's A Lovely Day Tomorrow"; Gershwin's "Foggy Day"; Youmans' "I Want To Be With You"; Rodger's "Glad To Be Unhappy" and "My Funny Valentine". Certainly not an album of pot-boilers. And Miss Martin sings them as only one with a warm personality and charm can.

Lehman Engel has given her support, which besides being unique, is perfectly in keeping and in proportion with her voice. This album is truly a labor of love and all concerned, including Columbia, deserve a sincere round of applause.

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